

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 07501 240924Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

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R 240721Z JUL 78
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TO SECSTATE WASDC 6605
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
A/AMEMBASSY MANILA 6566
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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, MY
SUBJ: MALAYSIAN ELECTIONS: SARAWAK RETURNS IN

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LUMPUR 6787 DTG 100925Z JUL 78, C) KUALA LUMPUR
A-031, 04/11/78

1. THE RULING NATIONAL FRONT (NF) WON 20 OF THE
21 CONTESTED PARLIAMENTARY SEATS IN THE TWO-WEEK
STAGGERED POLLING IN SARAWAK. THE ONLY OPPOSITION
SEAT (LAMBIR) WENT TO RAYMOND SZETU, THE ONLY
CANDIDATE OF THE NEWLY-FORMED SARAWAK PEOPLE'S
ORGANIZATION (SAPO). THE NF THUS HOLDS 131 OF
THE 154 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT, THE DEMOCRATIC
ACTION PARTY (DAP) 16, THE ISLAMIC PARTY (PAS) 5,
SAPO ONE AND THERE IS ONE INDEPENDENT (MARK KODING
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PAGE 02 KUALA 07501 240924Z

OF SABAH, WHO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL JOIN A
NF PARTY--PROBABLY BERJAY--IN SEVERAL MONTHS).

2. MOST NF CANDIDATES WON BY COMFORTABLE
MAJORITIES IN SARAWAK. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE
SARAWAK UNITED PEOPLES PARTY (SUPP), THE
PREDOMINANTLY CHINESE SARAWAK COMPONENT OF THE

NF, HAD RESIGNED AND CONTESTED AS INDEPENDENTS AFTER THE SUPP LEADERSHIP DECIDED TO REMAIN IN THE FRONT FOR THE ELECTION. ALL OF THEM WERE DEFEATED WITH SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITIES. THE NEWLY-ORGANIZED MALAY-BASED PAJAR PARTY, WHICH FIELDDED 13 CANDIDATES IN THE ELECTIONS, WAS WIPE OUT; ITS LEADER, ALLI KAWI, LOST TO DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH SULEIMAN DAUD BY 13,000 VOTES TO 7,000, ALTHOUGH THE PARTY DID GAIN 13 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL VOTES AND 24 PERCENT OF THE VOTES WHERE IT CONTESTED.

3. COMMENT. THE DEFEAT OF PAJAR AND THE SUPP DISSIDENTS MEANS THAT SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER DATUK PATINGGI RAHMAN YAAKUB HAS, FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST, FENDED OFF CHALLENGERS ATTEMPTING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS SUPPOSEDLY GROWING UNPOPULARITY. HOWEVER, AS NOTED RE C, OPPONENTS OF RAHMAN CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE A MUCH STRONGER EFFORT AGAINST HIM IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTION WHICH IS DUE WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR. IN A JULY 23 SPEECH KUCHING RAHMAN GAVE INDICATIONS THAT HIS POSITION IS NOT AS FIRM AS MIGHT SEEM FROM THE ELECTORAL RESULTS. HE ANNOUNCED THAT HIS PARTI PESAKA BUMIPUTRA BERSATU (PBB), THE MUSLIM-BASED SARAWAK NF PARTY, WILL MERGE WITH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KUALA 07501 240924Z

PENINSULAR MALAY UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO), THE DOMINANT MEMBER OF THE NF, AND BECAME THE SARAWAK BRANCH OF UMNO. THIS SAME PLOY WAS TRIED BY THE MUSLIM-BASED UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (USC) AFTER ITS DEFEAT BY BERJAYA IN THE 1976 SABAH STATE ELECTION; THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS IGNORED BY UMNO, WHICH HAS NEVER LOOKED KINDLY ON ABSORBING PARTIES WHICH INCLUDE NON-MUSLIMS, AS BOTH UMNO AND PBB NOMINALLY DO. RAHMAN SAID HE WOULD MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN AND OTHER UMNO LEADERS SOON TO DISCUSS THE MERGER, THE COMING STATE ELECTION AND RAHMAN'S OWN FUTURE POSITION. IN THE SAME SPEECH RAHMAN ASSURED HIS SUPPORTERS THAT HE WOULD QUOTE SERVE THE PEOPLE IN ANY POSITION, BE IT AT STATE OR FEDERAL LEVEL, UNQUOTE A SIGN RAHMAN MIGHT RETURN TO THE FEDERAL CABINET AND THEREBY BE EFFECTIVELY REMOVED FROM THE SARAWAK POLITICAL SCENE. MILLER

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